



PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT
National Register Eligibility
Houston-Whitehead Farm
("Fairview")
Cedar Creek Hundred, Sussex County,
Delaware

John Milner Associates, Inc.
March 2005

Intended for project team use



JMA architectural
and engineering
services
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CEDAR CREEK HUNDRED, SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE**

Submitted by

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INTENDED FOR PROJECT TEAM USE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

JMA personnel undertook a preliminary architectural survey and field assessment of the Houston-Whitehead farm, also known as “Fairview,” located southwest and immediately adjacent to Lincoln (Figure 1). The purpose of this preliminary assessment was to determine if the Houston-Whitehead Farm is likely eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historical research entailed a land use and development history of the farm, and included examination of deed records, tax assessments, court records (orphans court and probate documents), maps, and other visual records, as available. The field assessment included a site visit in order to develop a preliminary assessment of the architectural and historical integrity of the farm. Repositories consulted included the Delaware Public Archives and the Sussex County Deed Office. Knowledgeable individuals with information about the history and development of the farm were contacted, including the owner, Mrs. Bea Whitehead, and Mr. Brooke Clendaniel.

A summary of JMA’s findings is presented below, beginning with a physical description of the property, followed by a historic overview and our recommendations regarding the likely National Register eligibility of the Houston-Whitehead Farm.

2.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Houston-Whitehead Farm consists of two tracts of land, originally contiguous but currently separated by the right-of-way for U.S. Route 113 (Figure 1). The larger of the two tracts, measuring 185.96 acres, is bounded on the east by Old State Road, on the south by Haflinger Road, and on the west by U.S. Route 113. This tract, largely planted in corn, contains the house and associated outbuildings and the remains of a family cemetery. Archeological remains of a second house, shown near the north edge of the property in an earlier estate partition map, may be present.

The second, irregularly shaped tract extends for 3,400 feet along the west side of U.S. Route 113 and for 1,380 feet along the north side of Clendaniel Road. This property, planted in a mixture of grass, scrub, and woodlands, contains remnants of at least two agricultural outbuildings and a recently constructed, gabled roof, wood-framed cottage.

Access to the house is by means of a tree-lined, gravel driveway that extends southwest from the west side of Old State Road. The house is situated approximately 720 feet from the west side of Old State Road, and its principal elevation faces east toward the road.

2.1 THE HOUSE

In general form, the Houston-Whitehead residence is a two-story, five-bay I-house with a two-story, gabled rear ell and several rear additions. As noted by the present owner, the house was originally a single room deep (Whitehead 2004). The east façade features a central cross gable and a three-bay, hipped-roof, Victorian front porch (Plate 1). The porch shelters the main entry to the house which is placed in a projecting central bay. The porch, which appears to be a recently erected reproduction, is supported by concrete posts and has a wood base. The wood posts are chamfered with elaborate sawn brackets. The balustrade uses a perforated wood design, and the railing is molded. The two-leaf front doors are protected by wood-framed screen/storm doors. Paired, six-over-six, double-hung, sash windows set in a pedimented surround are placed in the second story of the central bay. The central bay is crowned with a gable with returns. A

triangular-topped, six-over-six, double-hung, sash window is placed in the gable peak. The peak is sheathed in board and batten.

The two symmetrical end bays of the façade are fenestrated with single, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows with shelf lintels. Most of these windows have paneled, wood shutters with wrought-iron hardware. The front wall is sheathed in clapboards with plain corner boards. The north gable end wall features a boxed cornice with returns (Plate 2). Two, three-light windows light the attic. The corner boards take the form of pilasters. The south gable end has an exposed, brick chimney stack in its first story, a single, six-over-six, double-hung, sash window with shelf lintel in the second story, and two, three-light attic windows (Plate 3). Its gable is also defined by a boxed cornice with returns. The roof is sheathed in composition shingles, and brick interior end chimney project from the roof ridge. A bulkhead with two-leaf, sheet metal doors projects from the south gable end.

The south wall of the rear ell is recessed from the wall plane of the south gable end of the main block. A shed-roofed, recently-built, enlarged kitchen block projects from the first story of the ell and extends beyond the wall plane of the main block. Fenestration of the kitchen block consists of a ribbon of single-light, casement windows. The second story south wall of the rear ell, and the second story rear wall of the main block are fenestrated with single, six-over-six, double-hung, sash windows.

The north wall of the rear ell exhibits several additions and alterations. A two-story, flat-roofed addition projects from the junction of the main block and the rear ell. A shed-roofed block adjoins the west wall of the addition and extends beyond the plane of the rear block of the ell. This block is fenestrated with three casement windows in its north wall. The second story north wall of the rear ell is fenestrated with a six-over-six, double-hung, sash window. The roof junction is marked by a board fascia, while the roof is sheathed in composition shingles. An interior end brick chimney with brick arched cap and corbelling projects from the roof ridge.

A one-and-one-half story addition adjoins the end wall of the rear ell (Plate 4). According to the present owner, this block is reputed to be a former quarter for enslaved workers moved to the site (Whitehead 2004). A modern, wood-framed deck adjoins the south wall of the addition and provides access to the double, wood-framed, glass doors in the end wall of the kitchen addition. The porch, with its west end, wood-framed steps, also provides access to a door in the south wall of the addition. This door is flanked by six-over-six, double-hung, sash windows. A third six-over-six, double-hung, sash window is placed toward the west end of the north wall and is surmounted by a fixed sash, wood-framed window. A gabled dormer, fenestrated with paired, two-light windows projects from the south roof slope. The west gable end of the addition features a single, six-over-six, double-hung, first floor window, and a two-light attic window, placed off-center (Plate 5). A shed-roofed, single-story, wood-framed, screened porch projects from the north wall of the rear addition. A second, recently constructed, wood-framed deck adjoins the north wall of the porch. A square skylight projects slightly from the center of the north roof slope of the rear addition, and an interior end brick chimney rises from the roof ridge.

The cellar of the main block is accessible by means of the bulkhead that adjoins the south gable end. The walls of the cellar are constructed of brick sheathed in stucco. Hewn beams (Plate 6) with attached patches of bark extend the width of the cellar and support the wide floorboards above. Exposed plumbing pipes are visible, as are several jacks used to provide structural support.

The first floor of the main block features a central hall plan (Plate 7) with large rooms to either side of the hall. The stair hall features an L-shaped, open-stringer staircase with panels (Plate 8). The staircase has a fancy turned newel and turned balustrades. It adjoins one wall of the hall. The east end of the stairhall features two-leaf main entry doors set in a reeded surround with bull's-eye corner blocks. The doors have oblong lights in their upper section and panels below. A hanging bronze and frosted glass light fixture illuminates the hallway. The side walls of the hallway include built-in, wood-paneled, Colonial Revival bookcases and doorways set in paneled reveals with surrounds featuring bull's-eye corner blocks (Plate 7). The walls are topped with cornice moldings.

First story rooms of the house feature the most elaborate woodwork with tall wood paneling, recessed paneled cabinetry, paneled wood mantelpieces with brick hearths, plaster walls, and cornice moldings (Plate 9). Wrought-iron hinges and latches ornament some of the paneled cabinet doors. Exposed box beams ornament the ceiling of one room.

In addition to the central formal stair, small enclosed quarter flight stairs provide informal access between floors. Upper story rooms lack the elaborate woodwork of the first floor (Plate 10). Door surrounds are simple molded wood, lacking corner blocks, while room walls are typically wallpapered with cornice moldings and occasional recessed cabinets with wrought-iron hinges.

The first story of the rear ell and addition contains an enlarged kitchen. The south side wall of the ell has been punched through revealing timber wall framing. The rear addition, reputed to be a former quarter for enslaved laborers by oral tradition, has been substantially altered from its historic appearance. The first story rooms are sheathed in modern wood paneling, and ceiling fans hang from the ceiling (Plate 11). One of the two first-floor rooms contains a wood-burning stove. The second floor features a coved ceiling and wide floorboards (Plate 12). Doors are placed in plain board surrounds. Light is provided by a skylight and dormer.

As typical of timber-framed houses, the roof rafters in the attic of the main house block are marked with Roman numerals. These rafters are joined with wood pegs. Other early details include bark-covered rafters and forged, rose-headed nails.

2.2 OUTBUILDINGS

The property once included the full complement of outbuildings typical of a farm of its type. Most are no longer standing. The barn existed until the 1940s when it was destroyed by a lightning strike and fire. Existing outbuildings were erected in the twentieth century.

2.2.1 GARAGE/WORKSHOP

The largest of the three outbuildings near the house is a garage/carport/workshop, located to the west (Plate 13). The variation in materials of this wood-framed building indicates that it was constructed in several stages. The larger, side-gabled block is divided into four bays along its east wall. The south bay contains a wood and glass panel overhead door. A vertical board door is placed near the center of the east wall, while two steel rolldown doors are placed near the north end. The front wall is sheathed in vertical boards. A shed-roofed carport adjoins the south gable end wall of the garage. Its east wall is open, while its remaining walls are closed. The rear wall of the garage is irregularly pierced with windows. Approximately half of the roof of the building is sheathed in metal sheets, while the other half is sheathed in composition shingles. A concrete chimney rises from near the center of the rear roof slope.

2.2.2 EQUIPMENT SHED

A wood-framed equipment shed with shed roof, front pent, and open front wall is situated west of the garage/workshop (Plate 14). This shed has a lean-to addition constructed of plywood panels appended to its west wall. The shed itself is sheathed in vertical boards, and its roof is sheathed in corrugated metal.

2.2.3 TOOLSHED

A gabled and shed-roofed toolshed is located southwest of the equipment shed (Plate 15). According to the occupant of the house, it was recently built by her son using salvaged materials. The front wall of the building faces southeast. The gabled block has a six-panel wood door, centered in its front wall and flanked by a hanging metal light fixture. The front wall of the shed-roofed portion is pierced by a four-panel wood door. The walls of the main block are sheathed in wood paneling, while the walls of the shed block are constructed of vertical boards. The gable roof of the main block is sheathed in standing-seam metal.

2.3 CEMETERY

A small cemetery is located in the northwest portion of the fields northwest of the house (Plate 16). The cemetery includes five marble slabs, the visible evidence of a reportedly larger cemetery. The most recent burial is the 2001 memorial for Mort Whitehead, the husband of the current occupant of the house. According to informants, additional family members were once interred in the cemetery, but their remains have been moved to a cemetery in Milford. The total number of interments within the cemetery is currently not known.

3.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The land that the Houston-Whitehead farm currently occupies was a portion of a tract that Benjamin Truitt, Senior of Sussex County, sold to Robert Houston, also of Sussex County, in 1760. A portion of the tract, a part of Radcliffe Adventure, initially patented in 1740 to Charles and Thaddeus Radcliffe, consisted of 200 acres of land and was sold by Truitt for 55 pounds current money (Sussex County Deed Book 1-9, 287-288, 11 November 1760; hereafter SCDB). According to family tradition, the current house was erected shortly after Houston's acquisition of the land.

Ascertaining biographical information about Robert Houston is complicated by the presence of two Robert Houstons in eighteenth-century Sussex County. One Houston, according to Scharf's *History of Delaware*, took up 200 acres of land in Dagsborough Hundred called "Houston's Folly" and married Agnes Nancy Laws (Houston and Sweet n.d.:23). The second, indicated in the Houston family genealogy as Robert H. Houston, son of John Houston, was reportedly born in Somerset County, Maryland. His first marriage is recorded to have been to Mary Purnell of Snow Hill, Maryland about 1751 or 1752. His wife died after the birth of their second child, Purnell[1], and Robert relocated to Cedar Creek Hundred. After moving to Delaware, he married Priscilla Laws, daughter of John Laws and sister of Agnes Nancy Laws (Houston and Sweet n.d.:25).

As Houston and Sweet note, very little information is available concerning the life of Robert Houston prior to the War of Independence. During the War, he became known as an outspoken

advocate of independence, an unpopular position in a county where many residents were British sympathizers. A letter from Houston and others to the Council of Safety is reproduced in the Houston genealogy (Houston and Sweet n.d.:26-ff.). Robert Houston was also part of a committee authorized to survey a new site for the Sussex County seat (Houston and Sweet n.d.34). Additional research would be necessary to conclusively demonstrate that this Robert Houston was the one who resided in Cedar Creek Hundred.

In his will, Robert Houston devised ownership of his “manor plantation together with all the buildings and improvements thereon” to his wife, Priscilla. The Houstons had nine children, sons, James, Clement, John A.L. (b. December 30, 1751), Robert (b. March 5, 1764), Joseph (b. June 21, 1766), Liston (b. December 21, 1771), and Purnell (b. February 1, 1755), and daughters Nancy (b. April 29, 1758) and Priscilla (b. February 19, 1773) (Delaware Death Index and Houston and Sweet n.d.:25). Robert’s Will stipulated that following his wife’s death, the property would be largely divided between two of their sons, James and Clement. Robert Houston also bequeathed to his wife two African American men, Peter and Harry, two beds and furniture, a horse bridle and saddle, two cows and calves, one cart, one yoke of oxen, fifteen head of sheep, ten head of hogs, two sows and pigs, all the pewter and hard ware, one desk standing in the new room, one walnut table, one plank table, and one dozen chairs. This will was signed and sealed the 23rd of January 1788 (Houston and Sweet n.d.:25).

The extent of Priscilla Houston’s property following her husband’s death is suggested by an undated assessment, which valued her property in English monetary units. Enumerated items included: 293 acres of land, of which 145 was cleared, valued at £512, 15 shillings; one African American man Benjamin, age 53, blind; one African American woman Dynner, age 70; one African American woman Beb, age 50; one African American man Henry, age 52; one African American girl Nan, age 14; one African American boy George, age 10; one African American boy Robert, age 7; one horse, valued at £12; 2 colts, two years old, valued at £20; one sorrel colt and two cows, valued at £13; another sorrel colt and one cow and one calf, valued at £6, 5 shillings; one heifer, one sow, and fourteen shoats, valued at £9, 7 shillings; and 15 head of sheep and one yoke of oxen valued at £17, 5 shillings. In the same record, her son James was assessed for one African American male Cuger, age 15 years, valued at £48; one eight-year-old horse, valued at £28; and one two-year-old heifer and two calves, valued at £5 (Sussex County Assessments n.d.).

Priscilla Houston retained ownership of the farm property until her death. In her will, dated January 28, 1814 and filed March 8, 1814, ownership of the property passed to two sons, Clement (March 13, 1777-October 26, 1861) and James (b. January 16, 1775). Other bequests were made to her four daughters and three granddaughters (Sussex County Will Book G7:13, 8 March 1814). An inventory of her estate included the following items: wearing apparel, valued at \$4; one bed, etc., valued at \$25; one old pine chest, valued at 25 cents; one iron pot, valued at one dollar; three old Windsor chairs, valued at one dollar; one spinning wheel, valued at \$2.50; one old pine table, valued at 12.5 cents, one chest or case of drawers, valued at \$8; and one basket (Priscilla Houston probate file 1814). A undated assessment record for Cedar Creek Hundred lists Clement Houston’s taxable possessions: one African American woman, aged 21 years, valued at \$80; three horses, valued at \$75; one yoke of oxen, valued at \$25; four cows and four calves, valued at \$32; one sow and four pigs, valued at \$4; eight shoats, valued at \$8; and four young cattle, valued at \$9 (Sussex County Assessment Records n.d.).

At 40 years of age, Clement Houston married Nancy Shockley in 1814. His household was enumerated in the 1850 population census for Cedar Creek Hundred. Clement Houston was erroneously indicated as 70 years old (he was already 73), while his wife Nancy was 67. Also

listed as residing in the household were 40-year-old Priscilla Houston and 35-year-old Sarah. These two women were presumably daughters. The identity of the remaining listed individuals is uncertain. They included: 38-year-old Curtis; Ann, age 11; Reuben, age 7; Robert, age 4; Benjamin, age 19 (indicated as African American); Mary, age 6 (also indicated as African American); Caroline, age 7; Sarah, age 6; and James, age 66 (U.S. Census Bureau 1850).

Clement Houston, a widower, prepared his will on September 1, 1855, and the will was filed November 11, 1861, the year of his death. His estate inventory includes a typical assortment of farm and home property including a cow, valued at 40 dollars; a lot of chickerel, valued at 20 dollars; a lot of bed covers, valued at ten dollars; a lot of chairs, valued at ten dollars; and a lot of carpet, valued at 12 dollars (Clement Houston probate file). Among his 11 children was James, the youngest, born on February 8, 1823. Under item 6 of his will, Clement gave and devised to “my son James Houston all my mansion farm where on he...now resides.” This conveyance was subject to a \$75 annual payment to his sister. A Sussex County road return filed in March 1861 depicts a house on the north side of present Haflinger/Clendaniel roads owned by James Houston (Figure 2; Sussex County Road Returns).

James Houston married Caroline Clifton on November 14, 1848. Eighteen years later, in 1866, the Kent County Mutual Insurance Company insured two properties for James Houston, one the farm, the second a wood-framed dwelling in Lincoln. The farm is described as containing:

a two-story, wood-framed dwelling, 16 by 48 feet with a back building 16 by 18 feet, three chimneys, three fireplaces warmed with the same and stoves with the pipes well secured. Ashes away from any buildings. A well in the yard. Nearest building 30 feet. This property is on the road from Milford to Georgetown owned and occupied by the subscriber as a residence (Kent County Mutual Insurance Company Policy).

The estimated value of the property was \$2,000, while the insured value was \$1,200. After James Houston's death in September 1884, the policy was transferred to Lizzie H. Whitehead on November 5, 1886. On D.G. Beers's 1868 plat of Cedar Creek Hundred in the *Atlas of Delaware*, the Houston farm is shown as “Fairview” (Figure 3). The present house is shown at its current location, and a second house is depicted in the southern portion of the tract near current Haflinger/Clendaniel roads.

The 1870 agricultural census provides a profile of James Houston's farm. The farm, which consisted of 200 improved acres and 100 acres of woodlot, was valued at \$9,000, a higher value and larger sized than surrounding farms. Farming implements and machinery were valued at \$400. Houston paid a total of \$300 in wages to farm laborers during the preceding year. His livestock included three horses, four milch cows, four other cattle, and two swine valued at a total of \$300. Crops included 150 bushes of Indian corn, 80 bushels of white potatoes, and 25 bushels of sweet potatoes. Orchard crops were valued at \$125. Two hundred pounds of butter was produced. Forest products valued at \$500 were sold. Slaughtered animals were sold for \$100. The approximate total value of all farm production was \$1,000 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1870a). The population census of the same year enumerated his household. Houston himself, a 47-year-old farmer, had real estate valued at \$10,000 and a personal estate valued at \$1,200. His household also included his 40-year-old wife Caroline, indicated as keeping house; daughter Lizzie, age 17, indicated as attending school; son, John W. age 12, indicated as at home; son Charley G., age 12, indicated as at home; daughter Carrie, age 5; and a farm laborer, Bill Edwards, age 26 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1870b).

Ten years later, Houston was recorded as owning a farm with 60 tilled acres, 14 acres in permanent meadows, pastures, or orchards, and 80 acres in woodland and forest. It is uncertain why the remainder of his acreage was not enumerated. The value of the farm was recorded as \$8,000, while the value of implements and machinery was \$200, and the value of livestock was \$250. Houston spent \$120 on fertilizer in the previous year and \$144 for farm labor. The total value of farm production was \$600. Livestock included two horses, three milch cows, one other cow, four swine, and 15 chickens. A total of 500 pounds of butter was made and 75 dozen eggs were produced. Crop production included 200 bushels of Indian corn on 80 acres, 80 bushels of wheat on 10 acres, three bushels of dry beans, 20 bushels of Irish potatoes on two acres, and 75 bushels of sweet potatoes on two acres. His orchard included 20 acres of apple trees and 20 acres of peach trees. One hundred fifty bushels of apples and 700 bushels of peaches were produced. A total of 20 cords of wood was cut from the farm's woodlots (U.S. Bureau of Census 1880).

By the time of the 1880 population census, two families resided on the original Houston farm property: the James Houston family and the Frederick Whitehead family. James Houston, 57, was a farmer. The other members of his family included his wife Caroline, age 51; his son John, 23 ("at college"); 19 year old son Charles G., who resided at home; and 14 year old daughter Carrie. The second household, the Whiteheads, included 35-year-old Frederick; 27-year-old Lizzie (Houston), his wife; their three year old daughter Carrie; and William Abbott, a 24-year-old farm laborer (U.S. Census Bureau 1880).

After the death of James Houston, widower, the property passed by intestate succession. In 1886, three of his heirs, his children, John W. Houston of New York City, an attorney (1857-1918), Charles L. Houston of San Francisco, and Carrie Houston of Sussex County, sold the 302 acre tract of land to sibling Lizzie Houston Whitehead (1853-1929), their sister, for \$4,500 (SCDB 106:136-138, 1 September 1886). In 1900, Lizzie Whitehead's household was enumerated as follows: Frederick A. Whitehead, 49, farmer; Lizzie H., age 44; Frederick H., son, 25; Mortimer C, son, age 15; Laurita E. daughter, 12; and sister-in-law, Carrie Houston (U.S. Census Bureau 1900).

The 302-acre parcel was split into two separate parcels by the construction of the DuPont Highway, a project opposed by the Whitehead family because of the detrimental effect on their farm (Whitehead 2004). At the time of the planning of the highway in 1911, two buildings were located on the western portion of the tract, immediately west of the right-of-way (Coleman DuPont Road 1911). These buildings, a house and a barn, remained standing after the road was constructed but were later demolished.

Lizzie Houston Whitehead died intestate on January 5, 1929, survived by her three children, Laurita E. Whitehead, Mortimer C. Whitehead and Frederick H. Whitehead. A petition to partition the real estate holdings was filed in Sussex County Orphans' Court.

In 1935, the Orphans' Court divided the holdings of Lizzie Houston Whitehead into two equal parts. Tract No. 1 contained 88 acres, while Tract No. 2 contained 197 acres. Tract No. 1, improved with two, two-story dwellings and outbuildings and valued at \$4,450, was assigned to Frederick H. Whitehead. Tract No. 2, improved with a two-story dwelling and also valued at \$4,450, was assigned to Mortimer C. Whitehead (Figure 4) (Orphans' Court Record B.N. 67, 1-23; 5 September 1935). The eastern tract (Tract No. 2) was depicted with the present dwelling, as well as a second house in the northwest corner of the tract. The western tract (Tract No. 1) contained a house located west of the DuPont Highway at the southern boundary of the tract. The roughly triangular tract of land on the east side of Old State Road was subsequently sold off (Figure 4).

Frederick H. Whitehead died seized of Tract No.1, leaving his will dated January 19, 1935. In 1945, the First National Bank and Trust Company of Milford, executor under his will, sold the tract, then measured at 70 acres, to Laurita E. Whitehead of Cedar Creek Hundred for one dollar and other considerations (SCDB 352:371-373, 29 March 1945). This smaller tract size is indicative of the sale of the portion of the tract east of Old State Road.

Three years later, Laurita E. Whitehead sold the 70-acre tract to Mortimer C. and Violet A. Whitehead of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania for one dollar and other good and valuable considerations (SCDB 380:258-259, 21 July 1948). This united the two tracts under common ownership.

In 1949, two transactions took place for the purpose of converting ownership of the property to a joint tenancy. Mortimer C. and Violet A. Whitehead of Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, conveyed a tract of 197 acres of land to a straw purchaser, Ruth E. Wilkins of Georgetown, for one dollar and other good and valuable considerations. The same day, Wilkins conveyed ownership back to Mortimer and Violet Anderson Whitehead (SCDB 388:129-131, 7 June 1949; SCDB 388:131-132, 7 June 1949).

Mortimer C. Whitehead died in 1958. In 1969, Violet A. Whitehead sold the two tracts, the first of 70 acres, and the second of approximately 197 acres, to her son Mortimer A. Whitehead, then employed by the Research Division of the Scott Paper Corporation, in Lester, Pennsylvania, for one dollar and other good and valuable considerations (SCDB 645:945, 15 September 1969). Mortimer Whitehead continued to live in Pennsylvania until his retirement in 1991. In that year, he and his wife moved to Delaware and began fixing up the house. Prior to their occupancy, the front of the house was rented out, while Violet Whitehead lived in the rear portion (Whitehead 2004).

In 1992, in order to convey partial ownership of the property to his wife, Beatrice A., Mortimer A. Whitehead filed a deed for the two adjacent tracts, the first of 70 acres and the second containing 197 acres, more or less (SCDB 1886:338, 16 December 1992).

In Mortimer Whitehead's will, ownership of the property was assigned to the Mortimer A. Whitehead Trust, c/o Beatrice A. Whitehead (Sussex County Will Book 384:339). Whitehead died in 2001.

4.0 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

JMA's preliminary assessment of the history and architecture of the property concludes that the Houston-Whitehead Farm, known as "Fairview," is likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A, C, and D.

As noted in the historic overview, the property has remained in single family ownership, the Houston-Whitehead family, since the time of construction of the timber-framed house core in 1760. As such, it is one of the earliest remaining intact farm properties in this area of southern Delaware, and the core of the house is representative of the early colonial settlement of interior Sussex County. Further, if additional building fabric investigation is able to confirm the anecdotal identification of the rear ell as a former quarter for enslaved laborers, the property would also be significant for its association with African American history. As noted, Sussex County

assessment records confirm that at least Priscilla Houston and her son Clement were owners of enslaved African Americans. Therefore, the Houston-Whitehead Farm appears to possess local significance under Criterion A for its association with the agricultural and settlement history of Sussex County and may also possess significance in African American history of Sussex County.

The farmhouse has undergone some notable changes over time. The original single-bay block of the house, believed to constitute the eighteenth-century dwelling, has been expanded several times. Additional changes include replacement of the Victorian vernacular front porch, installation of stained glass windows, replacement of some interior woodwork, and replacement of some windows. As indicated in the architectural description, the original core of the house is believed to have been erected in about 1760. As families grew, as technology and preferences changed, additions were made to this original core. In its present appearance, the building incorporates eighteenth- nineteenth- and twentieth-century additions. The house is likely to be locally significant as an example of several periods of construction (Criterion C), a cohesive unit conveying the evolution of an original eighteenth-century farmhouse.

Possible eligibility under Criterion D is likely both for archeological information potential and building fabric information potential. Anecdotal information and surface-collected artifacts indicates the presence of Native American sites in the farm fields, while documentary research indicates that archeological deposits are present for historic period sites, including locations of former outbuildings in the immediate vicinity of the farm complex and secondary houses on the larger property. Available evidence suggests that the eighteenth-century core of the house has been encased in later fabric. Indications of this original core are found in both the cellar and the attic of the house. This core has the potential to yield information significant to the study of eighteenth-century Delaware building practices. Therefore, the farm and the larger property are likely eligible for the National Register for local significance under Criterion D.

5.0 RECOMMENDED BOUNDARY

Although the property in Whitehead family ownership includes land on both the east and west sides of U.S. Route 113, this heavily traveled highway serves as an edge, splitting the two parcels from each other. Therefore, the recommended boundary of the Houston-Whitehead Farm includes the entirety of the contiguous parcel (Figure 5). This boundary includes the house, the entrance drive, outbuildings in close proximity, potential archeological sites, and the remnants of the associated Houston-Whitehead family cemetery.

6.0 REFERENCES CITED

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1870b Population schedules, Cedar Creek Hundred, Sussex County. Microfilm on file at the Delaware Public Archives, Dover, DE.

1880a Productions of agriculture, Cedar Creek Hundred, Sussex County. Microfilm on file at the Delaware Public Archives, Dover, DE.

1880b Population schedules, Cedar Creek Hundred, Sussex County. Microfilm on file at the Delaware Public Archives, Dover, DE.

1900 Population schedules, Cedar Creek Hundred, Sussex County. Microfilm on file at the Delaware Public Archives, Dover, DE.

Whitehead, Beatrice (Mrs. Mortimer A.) (present property owner)

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FIGURES

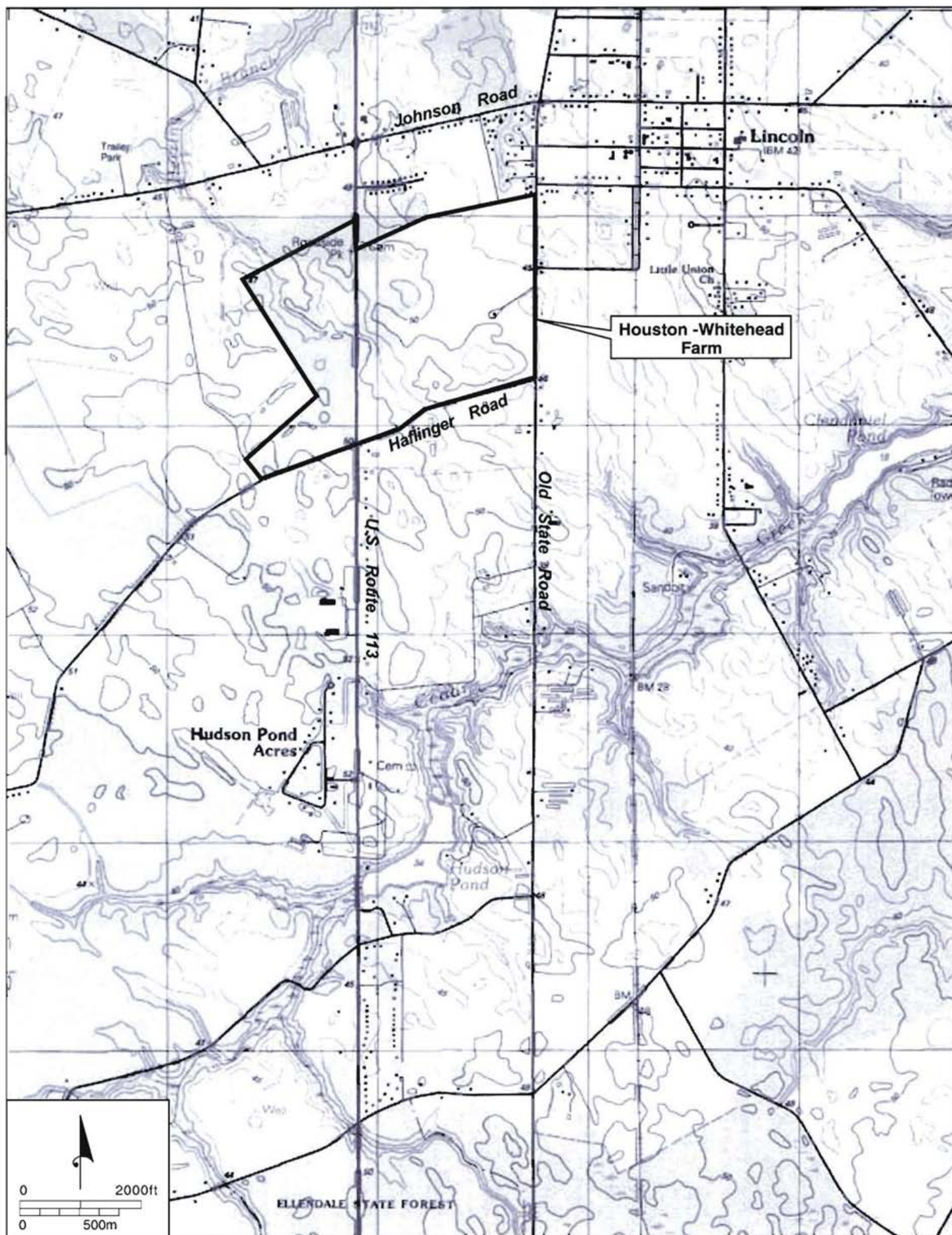


Figure 1. Location map. Ellendale 7.5-minute series, USGS quadrangle, 1992.

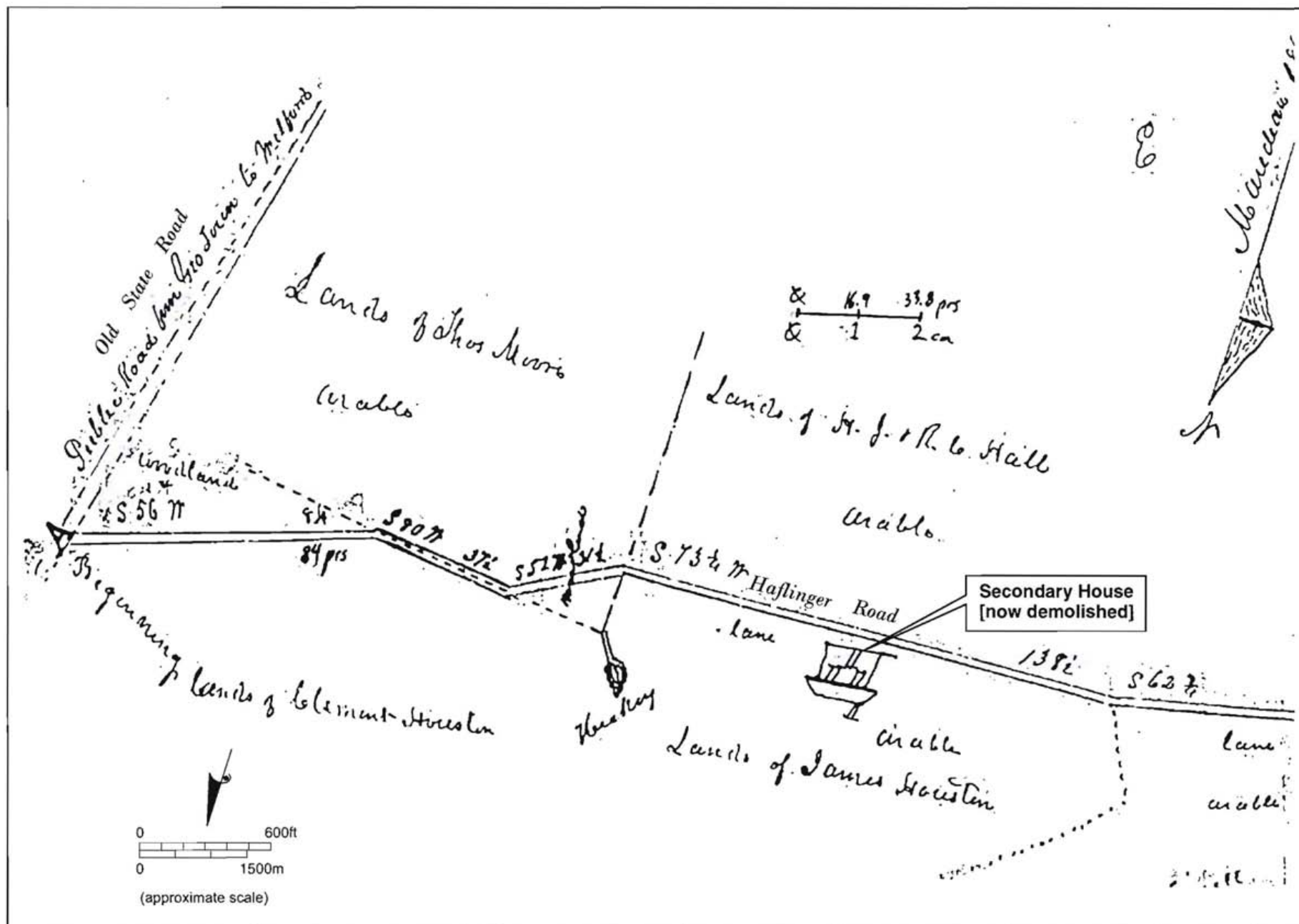


Figure 2. Detail of 1861 road return showing present Haflinger Road, Houston property and location of secondary house [now demolished]. From Sussex County road returns, Delaware Public Archives.

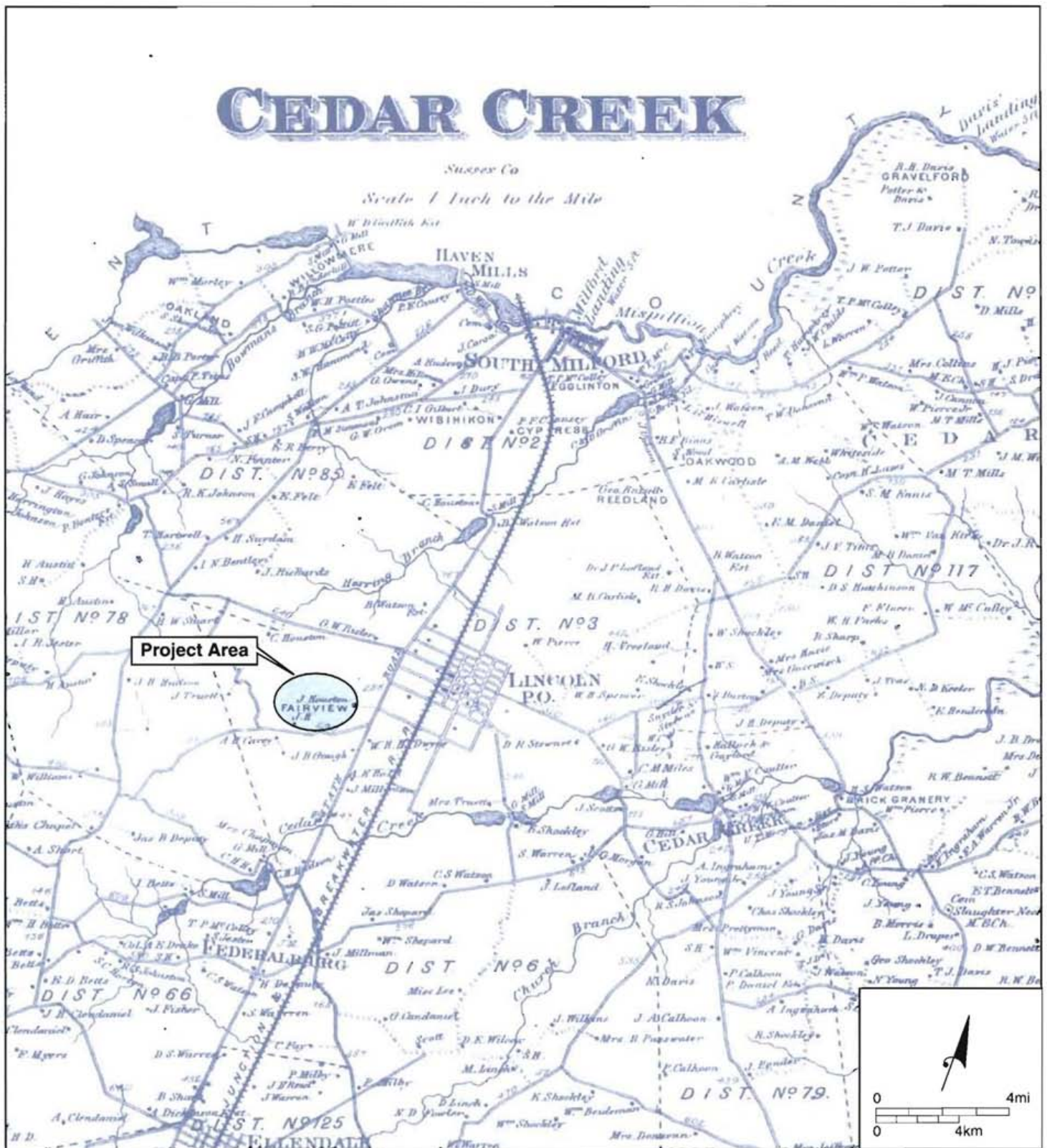


Figure 3. Detail of Cedar Creek Hundred, *Atlas of the State of Delaware* (Beers 1868), showing Fairview.

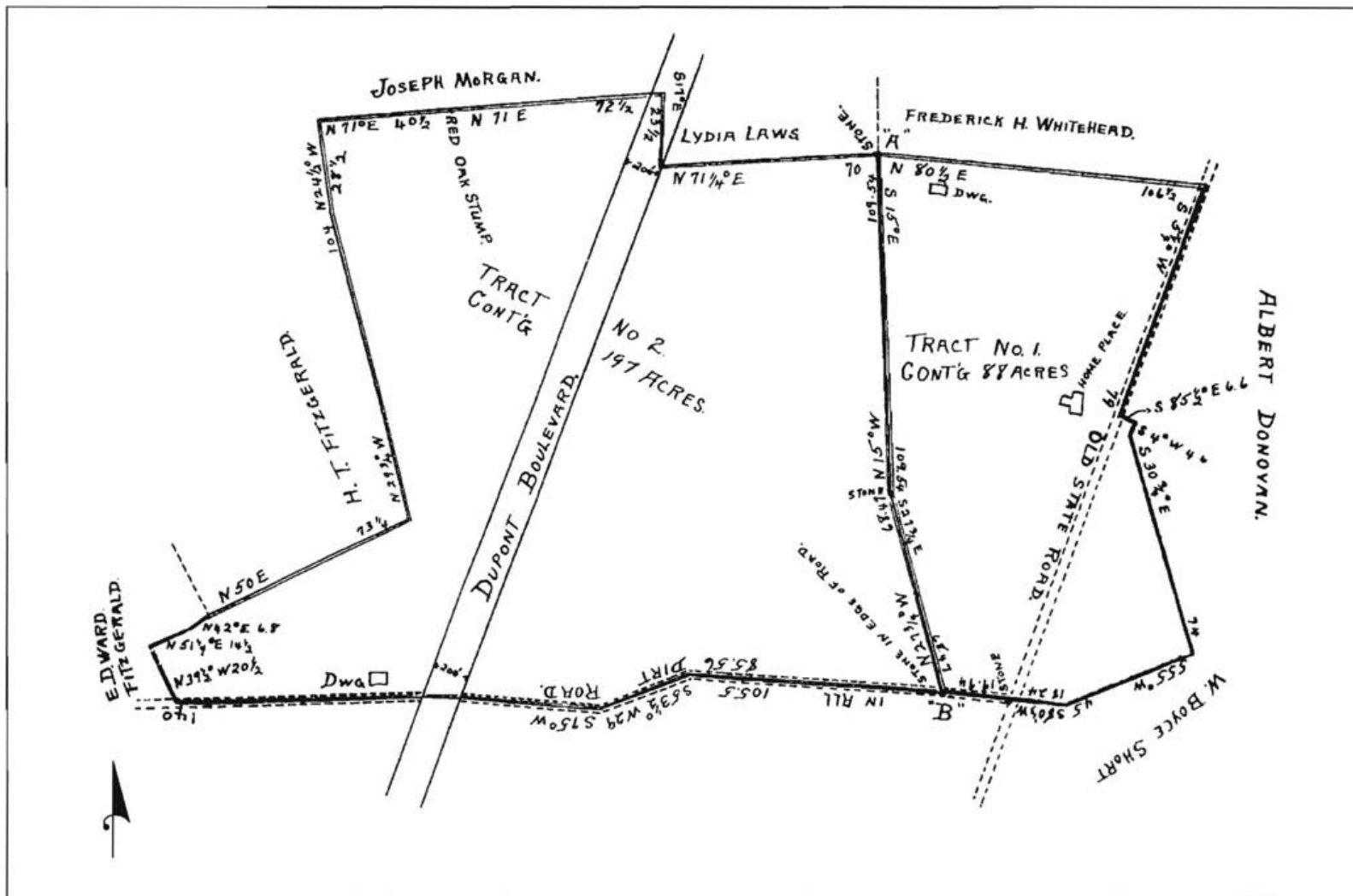


Figure 4. Orphans' Court map showing 1935 partition of Houston-Whitehead property. From Orphans' Court files, Delaware Public Archives.

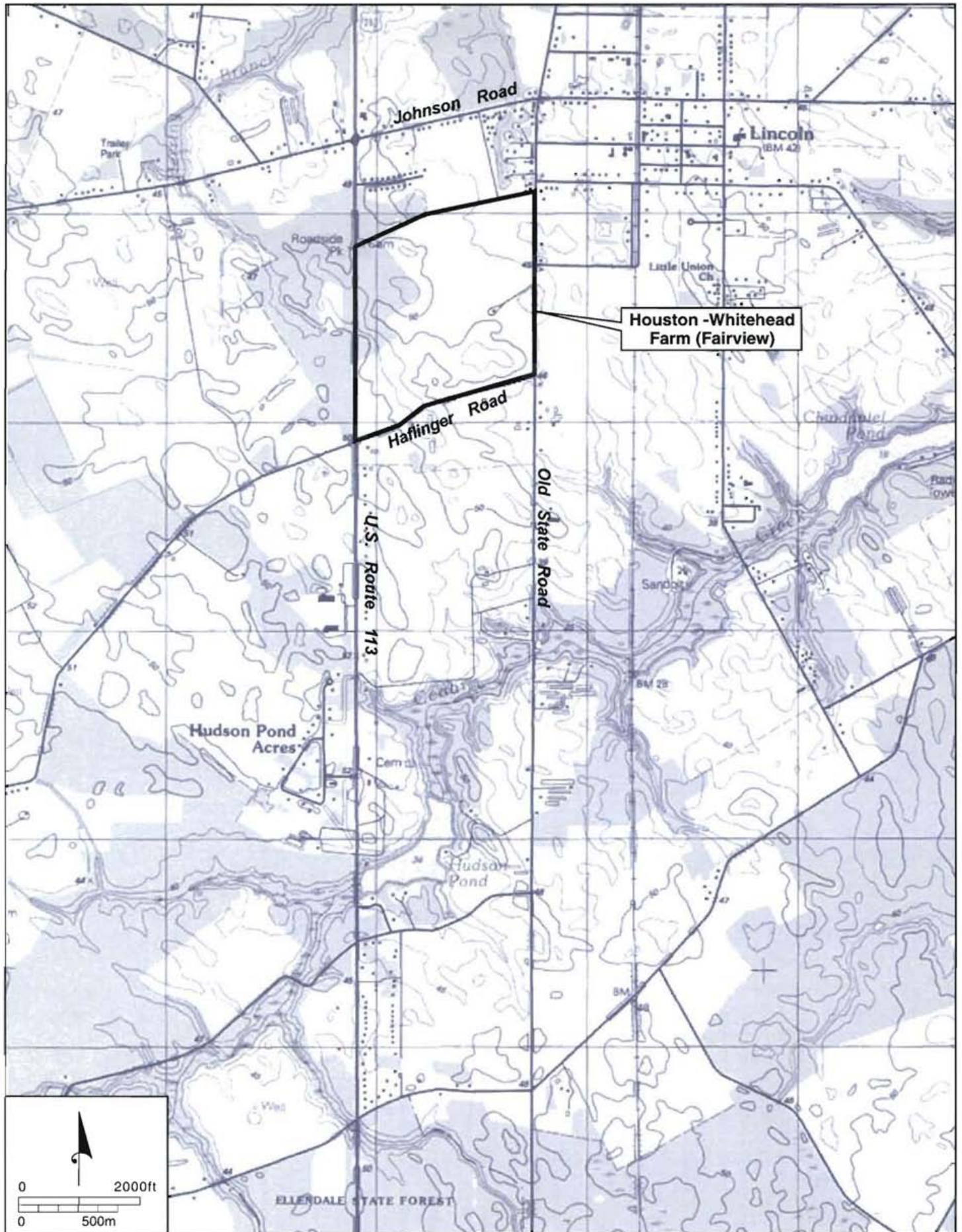


Figure 5. Recommended National Register boundary of Houston-Whitehead Farm (Fairview).

PLATES



Plate 1. House. East façade toward west.



Plate 2. House. North elevation toward south.



Plate 3. House. South elevation toward northeast.



Plate 4. House. South elevation of rear addition (former slave quarters?) toward northwest.



Plate 5. House. West elevation of rear addition toward east.



Plate 6. House. Cellar toward northwest. Note hand-hewn beam.



Plate 7. House. First floor central hall toward northwest.



Plate 8. House. First floor. Main staircase toward southwest.



Plate 9. House. First floor sitting room toward southwest.



Plate 10. House. Second story room toward south.



Plate 11. House. First story, rear addition. Toward southwest.



Plate 12. House. Second story, rear addition toward west.



Plate 13. Garage/Workshop. East elevation toward northwest.



Plate 14. Equipment shed. South elevation toward northeast.



Plate 15. Tool shed. Southeast façade toward northwest



Plate 16. Cemetery. View to west.